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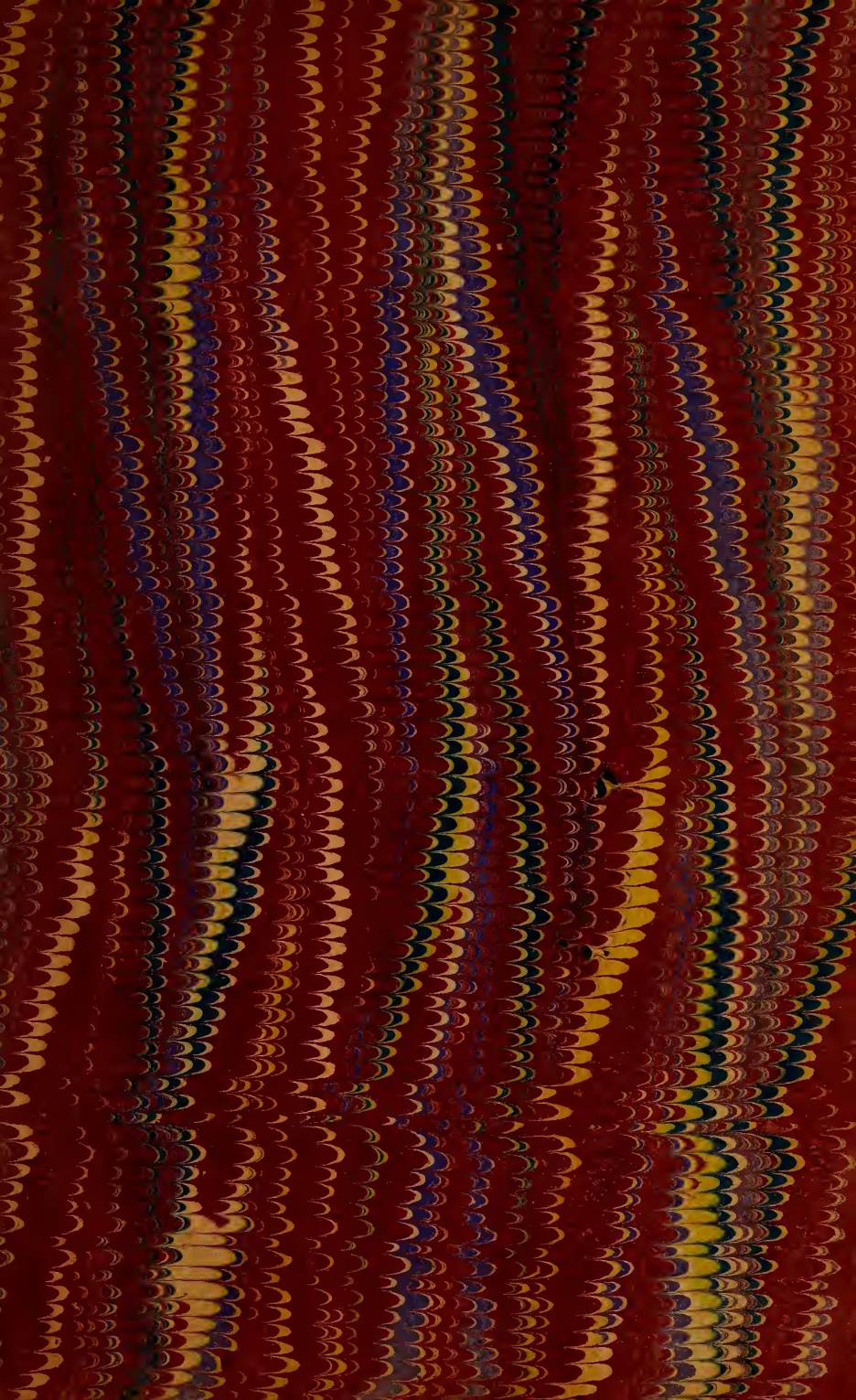
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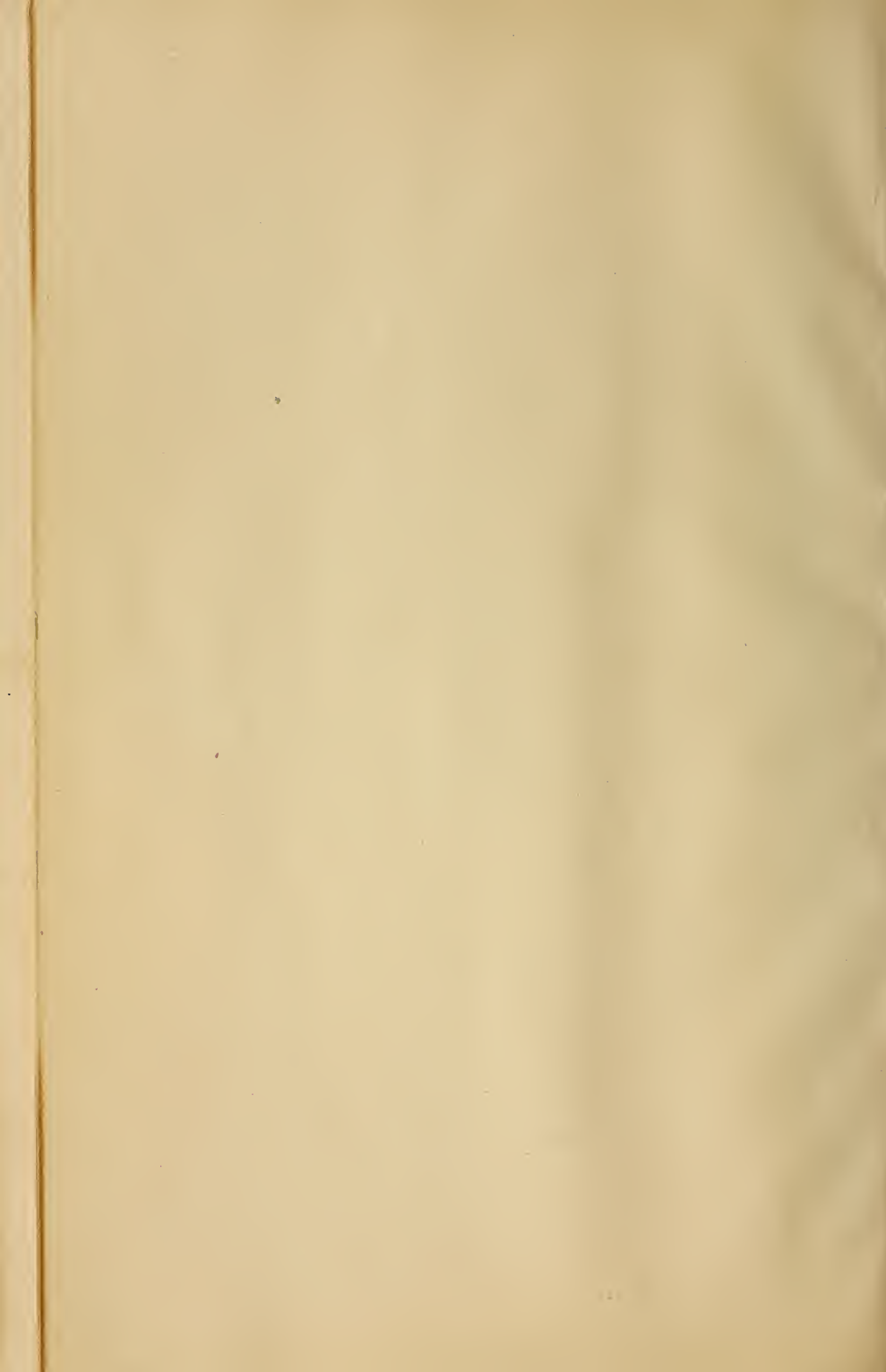














315-  
L.C.  
*Burns*

AT

GALSTON <sup>AND</sup> ECCLEFECHAN

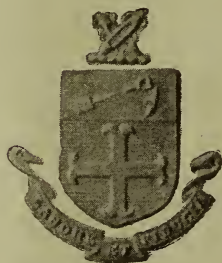
WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

JOHN MUIR, F.S.A., SCOT.,

*Author of*

*"Thomas Carlyle's Apprenticeship."*



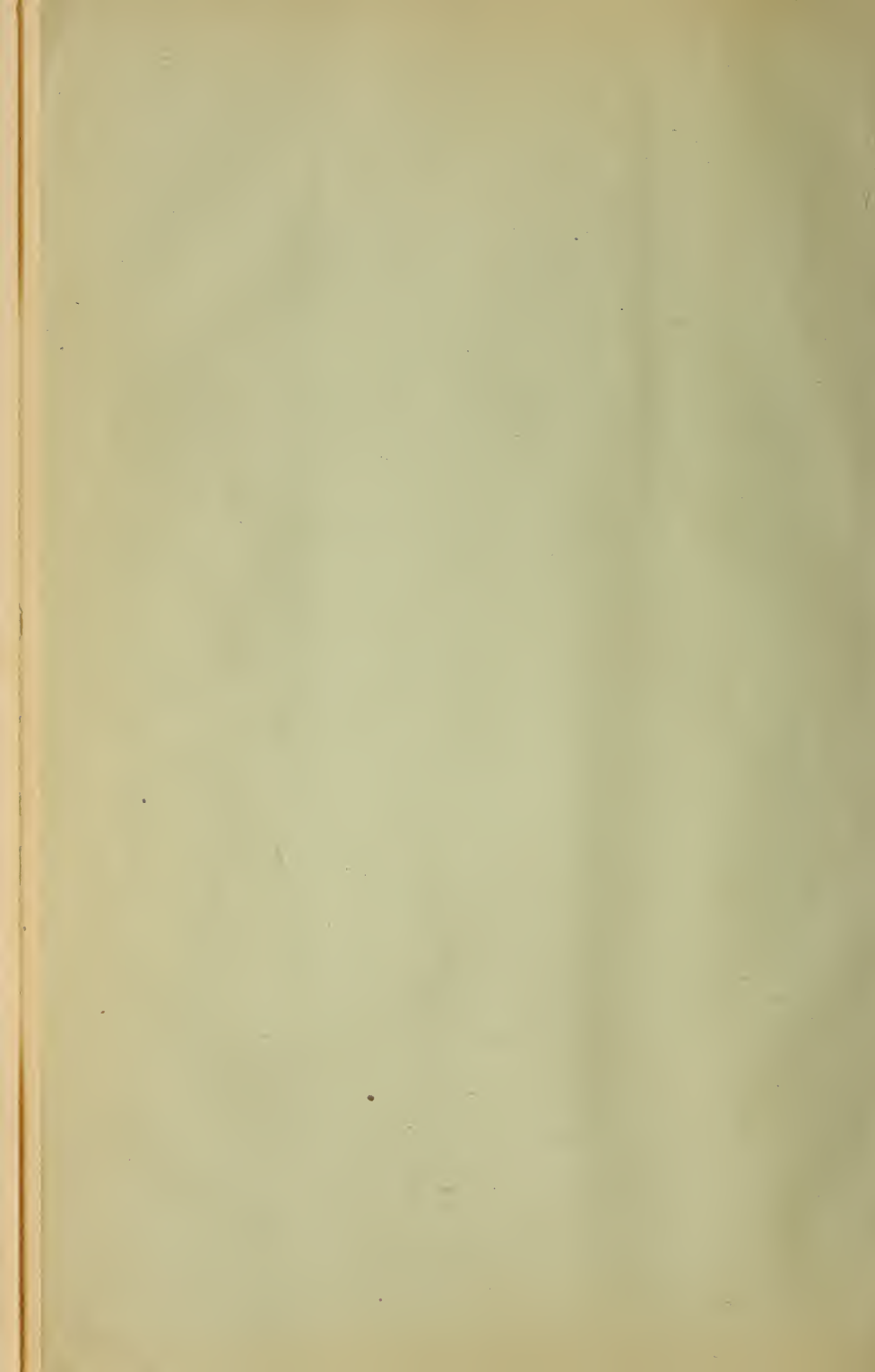
GALSTON BURGH ARMS.

Glasgow:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

1896.

PRICE SIXPENCE, NETT.



# BURNS

AT

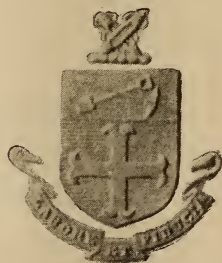
## GALSTON AND ECCLEFECHAN

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Fr. Mar. 10, 1901  
Bent. mBx, 26 April 1912

DEDICATED  
TO  
PROVOST WHITE,  
GALSTON.





## NOTE.

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THE Article on *Burns at Ecclefechan* is reprinted, with slight alterations, from the pages of a Scottish Magazine, revised and enlarged from a short paper under that title which appeared in the *People's Friend*. The other Article, on the poet's connection with the parish of Galston, is here printed for the first time.

I am indebted to the kindness of my artistic friends, Mr. JOHN MACINTOSH, Galston, and Mr. HARRY BERTRAM, Glasgow, for the Photographs and Drawings from which the illustrations were taken.

JOHN MUIR.

14 APSLEY PLACE,  
GLASGOW, 25th *January*, 1896.



## BURNS AT GALSTON.

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LEAVING the cross of Kilmarnock, and proceeding in a south-easterly direction, the pedestrian soon passes the Kay Park, in which is situated the Burns Monument, Museum, and Library, and in a short time finds himself passing through the clachan of Crookedholm and the village of Hurlford. Continuing in an easterly course, the road climbs up gradually to Hillhead toll-house, from which point it dips towards the bridge under which the

Cessnock pours with gurgling sound ; \*

dividing Galston parish on the west from that of Riccarton ; as the river Irvine divides it on the north from Loudon, and forms the boundary of the bailliewicks of Cunningham and Kyle, the names of two of the three divisions into which the shire of Ayr has from early historic times been divided.

On the Galston side of the Cessnock, a few miles up from this bridge, there was in the latter part of last century, a farm-house called Old Place, occupied by one Begbie, whose daughter, Ellison, figures conspicuously in the early prose and poetry of Burns—in the prose portion, as the recipient of five letters of an amorous nature ; and in the poetical part, as the heroine of three of Burns's lyrics, two of them being among the very finest he ever composed. Old Place was about two miles from Lochlie, the farm in which Burns lived in 1780 when he made the acquaintance of Ellison Begbie. Four letters of his to Miss Begbie, beginning "My dear E.," were first published by Dr. Currie in his first edition, but were afterwards withdrawn from subsequent issues of the work, but for what reason the editor never thought it worth his while to say. Mr. Scott Douglas, in his Library Edition, published for the first time what seems to have been the initial letter of the series. These five letters

\* From suppressed stanzas of Burns's *Vision*.

and three songs, with the meagre annotations of successive editors of the Poet's works, furnish us with all the authentic information which has hitherto been made public regarding this early and somewhat obscure period of Burns's history.

Under what circumstances the poet first met Ellison Begbie, we have now no means of ascertaining. There is a tradition in the district, which I have often heard repeated, that he took a fancy to her while passing her home with his cart for coals. However that may be, we learn from the correspondence that the poet had been several times in her company; and that although he had, according to his own confession, been most anxious to declare his passion, he had never had the courage to do so. Like many another bashful lover, he had recourse to letter writing; and after much sermonising, one is not surprised to learn that she refused the poet and married another lover. I quote the first letter in full:—

What you may think of this letter, when you see the name that subscribes it, I cannot know; and perhaps I ought to make a long preface of apologies for the freedom I am going to take; but as my heart means no offence, but on the contrary is rather too warmly interested in your favour, for that reason I hope you will forgive me when I tell you that I most sincerely and affectionately love you. I am a stranger in this matter, A——, as I assure you that you are the first woman to whom I ever made such a declaration; so I declare I am at a loss how to proceed.

I have more than once come into your company with the resolution to say what I have just now told you; but my resolution always failed me, and even now my heart trembles for the consequences of what I have said. I hope, my dear A——, you will not despise me because I am ignorant of the flattering arts of courtship: I hope my inexperience of the world will plead for me. I can only say I sincerely love you, and there is nothing on earth I so ardently wish for, or could possibly give me so much happiness, as one day to see you mine.

I think you cannot doubt my sincerity, as I am sure that whenever I see you, my very looks betray me; and when once you are convinced I am sincere, I am perfectly certain you have too much goodness and humanity to allow an honest man to languish in suspense, only because he loves you too well. And I am certain that in such a state of anxiety as I myself at present feel, an absolute denial would be a much preferable state.

Such is the letter in which Burns opens the correspondence with Miss Begbie. It is interesting as the earliest letter of the poet's which has been preserved; and judging from the style of



the penmanship, as shown in the fac-simile given by Mr. Douglas, it seems to have been written in 1779 or 1780, when Burns was in his teens. The sentiments in the closing paragraph of this letter have been paraphrased in the concluding verse of the song, *Mary Morison*, which is understood to have been inspired by the poet's passion for Ellison Begbie :—

O Mary, cans't thou wreck his peace,  
 Wha for thy sake would gladly die ?  
 Or cans't thou break that heart o' his  
 Whose only fau't is loving thee ?  
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,  
 At least be pity to me shown ;  
 A thocht ungentle canna be  
 The thocht o' Mary Morison.

In the foregoing letter, if Mr. Scott Douglas is correct, which I think he is, in supposing it to have been addressed to Miss Begbie, the reader will observe that Burns addressed her throughout as "A.," presumably the initial letter of "Allison." In the other four epistles, Miss Begbie is addressed as "E." This change was no doubt due to the poet observing that his correspondent signed her name "Ellison Begbie," and not "Allison Begbie," in accordance with the pronunciation of the Ayrshire peasantry, who have a tendency to broaden the vowel sounds. This fact, trifling in itself, has not before been pointed out by any editor of the works of Burns.

Passing over the intermediate letters, I extract the following passage from the fourth, which brought the matter to a climax :—

There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this, that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

Ellison, as we learn from the last letter of the series, did not keep her lover in suspense very long ; and her decision seems to have disconcerted the poet a little, for we find him beginning his last letter by apologising for the delay in answering hers, portions of which he quotes :—

I ought in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory ;

"you were very sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me," what without you I never can obtain, "you wish me all kind of happiness." It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy ; but sure I am, that sharing life with you would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I never can taste.

Burns goes on to say, anent his prospective removal to Irvine in the autumn of 1781 :—

I must now think no more of you as a mistress, still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such, I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will perhaps soon leave this place, I wish to see you or hear from you soon.

And this ends the matter as related in the correspondence.

Returning to the songs: the first that claims our attention is that entitled *The Lass of Cessnock Banks*. This, a most beautiful lyric, has been justly styled "A Song of Similes," and was probably suggested to the poet by the warm imagery in Solomon's "*Song of Songs*." The eleventh verse—there are fourteen in all—is little more than a paraphrase of one of the verses of the song attributed to the Jewish Monarch :

*Burns*—Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,  
With fleeces newly washen clean ;  
That slowly mount the rising steep ;  
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

*Solomon*—Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them. \*

A whole stanza is devoted to each of Ellison's charms, commencing with her "twa sparkling, roguish een," and embracing every personal and mental grace. At verse six, the poet comes to her *hair*, and thereafter in succession descants on her *forehead*, her *cheeks*, her *bosom*, her *lips*, her *teeth*, her *breath*, her *voice*, and, lastly, her *mind*.

Two of the verses must suffice for quotation here, chiefly on account of their localising the imagery, familiar to every native of Galston. In the manuscript the author has directed the words to be sung to the tune of, *If he be a butcher neat and trim*, whatever that may be. Any of our readers who have information on this point, will greatly oblige the writer, and the world at large, by making the same known, as no editor of Burns has ever been

\* Song of Songs, chap. 6, verse 6.

able to trace the air here mentioned. I quote two of the verses, referring the reader to the poems of Burns for the others :—

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze  
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,  
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas ;  
An' she has twa sparkling, roguish een.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush  
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen ;  
While his mate sits nestling in the bush ;  
An' she has twa sparkling, roguish een.

In *Bonnie Peggie Alison*, the poet emphasises the heroine's "bonnie blue een," which, in his first song, are further described as "roguish."

And by thy een sae bonnie blue,  
I swear I'm thine for ever, O !  
And on thy lips I seal my vow,  
And break it shall I never, O.

CHORUS.

*And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
And I'll kiss thee o'er again ;  
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
My bonnie Peggie Alison.*

But it is to the song on *Mary Morison* that the reader turns for Burns's purest and loveliest lyrical characterisation of Ellison Begbie, and the feelings inspired by her charms. I give this charming song in full :—

O, Mary, at thy window be,  
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour !  
Those smiles and glances let me see,  
That make the miser's treasure poor :  
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,  
A weary slave frae sun to sun,  
Could I the rich reward secure—  
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,  
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',  
To thee my fancy took its wing—  
I sat but neither heard nor saw :  
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,  
And yon the toss of a' the town,  
I sigh'd, and said among them a'  
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'

O, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,  
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?  
 Or canst thou break that heart o' his,  
 Whose only fau't is loving thee?  
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,  
 At least be pity to me shown;  
 A thocht ungentele canna be  
 The thocht o' Mary Morison.

From all that can be learned concerning Ellison Begbie, she appears to have been a very superior young woman, and a general favourite in her neighbourhood. Cromek traced her out as a married lady resident in Glasgow, and from her own lips took down the song, *The Lass of Cessnock Bank*, to the extent of her recollection—that is, omitting the eighth and ninth stanzas as given in Pickering's Aldine Edition, in 1839, where it first appeared in a completed state, taken from the poet's manuscript. Cromek's version also contains a large number of variations from the generally accepted text. At verse nine, through an awkward inadvertency in transcribing, Pickering sets down "Her teeth," instead of "Her bosom," to which the similitude used very appropriately applies; as the *teeth* of his charmer have full justice done them in verse eleven, quoted above. This slip of the pen on the transcriber's part, Mr. Douglas corrected for the first time. It is a matter of regret that nothing more seems to be known of Ellison than what Cromek made public, and the additional information given here.

Mr. Campbell Wallace, a native of Galston district, has in his possession a small pocket Bible said to have been given by the poet to Ellison Begbie. It was given by her father to the late Mr. John Gray, merchant in Glasgow, who gave it to Miss M'William, also of Glasgow, who in turn presented it to Mr. Wallace. This is all that seems to be known regarding the relic, which I have carefully examined, but which bears no marks or writing, like the Bibles presented to Highland Mary, throwing any light on its history.

A little below the Giant's Cave, on the Cessnock, and not far from where the farm of Old Place stood, until the early years of the present century, when it was removed and incorporated with a neighbouring farm, is Craig Mill, also in Galston parish, hardly a vestige of which is now to be seen. A family of the name of Goldie were millers there for three centuries. Of the last of the family, John Goldie, who was born there in 1717, we know a

little, as he also has obtained undying celebrity in the writings of Burns. He showed an early aptitude for science and mechanical skill, and soon became an adept in geometry, architecture, and astronomy. While yet a young man, he removed to Kilmarnock, where he carried on business, first as a cabinetmaker, and afterwards as a wine and spirit merchant; but all his leisure time was devoted to his favourite scientific pursuits and mechanical contrivances. In his religious views he was originally orthodox, and walked all the way from his father's house to Kilmaurs to attend the Anti-burgher church there of which he was a member. When he was about fifty years old, his opinions underwent a radical change, and he swerved into free-thinking, through the study of Dr. Taylor of Norwich's work on *Original Sin*, a book extensively read in Ayrshire in the days of Burns, whose father had a copy which the poet read. Eventually, Goldie published, in 1780, his opinions in three volumes, a second edition of which, extending to six volumes, octavo, was published in 1785; and so famous did the work become, that it was popularly termed "Goudie's Bible;" and I have often thought that Carlyle's "M'Croudie's Bible," in *Latter Day Pamphlets*, is a reminiscence of the opprobrious epithet attaching to John Goldie's book. Meeting one day with a wag who had been purchasing some ballads at a stall, Goldie asked him what was this he had got, to which the wit replied: "I have just been buying a wheen ballads to make psalms for your Bible."

It was on the appearance of the last edition of Goldie's *Essays on Various Subjects, Moral and Divine*, that Burns composed, in August, 1785, his epistle to the author, beginning:—

O Goudie! terror of the Whigs,  
Dread of black coats and rev'rend wigs,  
Soor Bigotry, on her last legs,  
Girnin', looks back,  
Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues  
Wad seize you quick.

Turning aside from the banks of the Cessnock and the literary associations of Old Place and Craig Mill, and retracing our steps after this long digression, we continue our journey eastwards up the valley of the Irvine, with the undulating meadows fringing its banks on our left, and the wooded demesne of Holmes on our right, and a few minutes' walk brings us within sight of Galston. There, coming into view, on an elevated site, in the centre of the town,



stands the parochial sanctuary, situated due east and west, the visible outcome of the Gospel of the Cross, preached by the saint to whom it was dedicated. Surrounding it are the narrow homes in which repose the remains of departed dalesmen. Around that, again, the village has clustered, nestling close to the church, named after St. Peter, the presiding genius of the place, who looks down patronisingly on the villagers, his stately spire, now lyart and grey, appropriately crowned with a brazen cock: the clouds passing overhead like silver-lined curtains drawn between him and the Eternal.



The above illustration represents Galston Parish Church, as seen from near the Muckle Brig, on the north-side of the Irvine, at the confluence of that river with the Burn Awn.

At the time when Burns was writing and publishing those wonderful poems which electrified his countrymen, the minister of Galston was the Rev. George Smith, who succeeded Dr. Wait, the former incumbent. Dr. Smith was a son of the manse, his father having been Mr. William Smith, minister of Cranstoun. His incumbency extended from 3rd February, 1778, when Burns was a young lad living at Lochlie, down to 1823, when the poet had been twenty-seven years in his grave,—when the Mausoleum had been erected, and the Cenotaph on the banks of Doon just completed. Dr. Smith was a man of culture and refinement, and a devoted student of the classics. As may be imagined, his leanings

were towards the New Light Party, by whom he was looked upon as one of their members. On this understanding, Burns meant to compliment the doctor in these stanzas from *The Holy Fair* :—

But hark ! the tent has chang'd its voice,  
 There's peace and rest nae longer ;  
 For a' the *real judges* rise,  
 They canna sit for anger.  
 Smith opens out his cauld harangues,  
 On *practice* and on *morals* ;  
 An' aff the *godly* pour in thrangs  
 To gie the jars an' barrels  
 A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,  
 Of *moral powers* an' reason ?  
 His English style, and gesture fine  
 Are a' clean out o' season.  
 Like Socrates or Antonine,  
 Or some auld pagan heathen,  
 The *moral man* he does define,  
 But ne'er a word o' *faith* in  
 That's right that day.

Smith saw more of the banter than the compliment in them ; and, therefore, the poet had a slap at him in good earnest in *The Kirk's Alarm* :—

Irvine-side ! Irvine-side !  
 Wi' your turkey-cock pride,  
 Of manhood but sma' is your share ;  
 Ye've the figure, 'tis true,  
 Even your faes will allow,  
 And your friends they dare grant you nae mair—  
 Irvine-side ! your friends they dare grant you nae mair.

And in *The Twa Herds*, Burns does not forget the subject of the above lines :—

And mony a ane that I could tell  
 Wha fain would openly rebel,  
 Forby turn-coats among oursel,—  
 There's Smith for ane ;  
 I doubt he's but a grey-neck guile,  
 And that ye'll fin'.

Dr. Smith, as Burns indicates in the verses quoted above from *The Holy Fair*, was a man of elocutionary power ; and many

people came to church to hear him for that alone. There are many traditions in the district regarding his elocution, especially his splendid reading of the paraphrases, which appears to have been his most noteworthy distinction in the eyes of the inhabitants. He had a large family of sons and daughters. His sons came to honour. One of them was minister of the second charge of the Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock, then of Penpont, and ultimately of the Tolbooth, Edinburgh. A picture of this son of the manse hangs in the Reading Room of Brown's Institute, Galston. Another of his sons, Mr. John Smith, the "Uncle John" mentioned in the speech of R. L. Stevenson, about to be given—was the last person to be buried in the old churchyard. Mr. Stevenson, the novelist, a few years before his lamented death, was the guest of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Sydney, at luncheon, when he delivered the following racy speech:—

I thought when I came here to-day that perhaps a text would be suitable. (Laughter.) The first text that occurred to me was this, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Then, upon second thoughts, which I believe we have the authority of our forefathers for saying are better thoughts, it occurred to me that I had a very good right to appear here. In the first place, I am a Scotsman—(cheers)—but upon that I will not dwell. (Cheers and laughter.) In the second place, I am an old, and I hope I may be allowed to say, a very good Presbyterian, the proof of which, I may say, is that I have sat out a sermon of an hour and thirty minutes. (Laughter.) It was delivered in the Parish Church of Leith, and by a remarkable coincidence, the Parish Church is still standing in support of my statement. (Laughter.) It was delivered by one of the most delightful old gentlemen I ever knew in my life. In the third place, I am a grandson of the manse, and a great-grandson of the manse. (Applause.) My grandfather was a minister of a parish close to Edinburgh. He was a nice old gentleman. (Laughter.) As for my great-grandfather, he had been placed in an historical position by Robert Burns. Dr. Smith, of Galston, was my great-grandfather. (Applause.) But again, and in connection with this said family, I have a particular right and feel a particular pleasure in being connected with the Assembly. One of the sons of Dr. Smith, of Galston, my great-uncle John Smith, first of Glasgow, and then of Helensburgh, was the most absolute child of the Church that perhaps ever lived. I think he appeared in the General Assembly every year. I cannot remember when I was a child any year passing, but when John Smith came up to stay with my father and mother in order to attend the Assembly. Where he got his appointments I do not know, but there he was always to the fore-front. I remember a jest of my father's, who desired there should be laid before the Assembly

on one occasion a report as to how many parishes (if any) John Smith had not assisted in the Sacrament. (Laughter.) He went everywhere : he was always officiating elder. If there was no Sacrament, he would visit the manse, and always for certain he would visit the churchyard. He was very tall, very lean, but here comes a difference, very good-looking. (Laughter and cheers.) He had a long beard, and was a man of portentous solemnity. He once told me a good story against himself when he had made a visit to the churchyard. My uncle went down to the graveyard in some strange parish, and there found a worthy-looking gentleman engaged in digging a grave. "Have you had much affliction in the parish lately?" said my uncle. The man stopped, put down his spade, and looked up into his face, rubbed his hands, and replied, "Affliction ! Why, I ha'na buried three since Lammas." (Laughter and cheers.) When I was invited to dine here to-day by the Moderator, it brought back to my mind a lively recollection of the name of Dr. Robert Lee, well known for his ritualistic tendencies, so unsuited to the Scottish temperament. When I was a young child, and, I may add, a very sickly child too, my uncle came up to the Session of the Assembly, as usual. I was lying in bed at the time, but, with his infinite good nature, before going to the Assembly, he came up to see me. He had a little conversation with me, and then when it was time to go to the Assembly, I shook my finger at him, and said, "Now, Uncle John, if you will take my advice, you will have nothing to do with that man Lee." (Laughter.) I have referred to the minister and his sermon of an hour and a half. I believe that of yore, our fathers were able to stand this manly and athletic exercise, but I think that for us and for the ladies, it would be best to avoid the excesses of our fathers, and therefore I will not weary you. (Cheers, and cries of "No," "Go on.")

The present church of Galston was built in 1808, and occupies the site of the structure which existed in Burns's time. The present manse was also built about the same time ; and the writer remembers, when a boy, having seen the crumbling walls of the old manse, which was situated at the back of the church, and at the head of an opening appropriately termed to this day the Old Manse Close. This old manse, then, was the residence of Dr. Smith, at the time he was earning the then unenviable distinction of having his portrait etched by Robert Burns. A highly-respected old gentleman, presently living in Galston, and holding a responsible public office there, has often told me that his mother, when a young girl, had been in the service of Dr. Smith, and that the poet's name was never mentioned in that household but in such terms of reproach as only the bitterest



feelings could engender. In this connection, the reader will echo the sentiments of Carlyle, in his celebrated essay on the poet:—

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps, “where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,” and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breast-work of gentility is quite thrown down,—who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother?

The present minister of Galston is the Rev. J. A. Hogg, B.D., a man who has endeared himself to the parishioners by the benevolence of his conduct and the attractiveness of his discourses. Mr Hogg succeeded the Rev. John Brown, B.D., now of Bellahouston, Glasgow, to whose interesting little book, *Three Centuries of Clerical Life in Galston*, I am indebted for some of the information incorporated into the present notes.

In the Old Manse Close there also resided, at a late period of his life, the John Rankine to whom Burns addressed several poems, among others, the lines beginning:—

O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankin,  
The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin'!  
There's monie godly folks are thinkin'  
Your dreams an' tricks  
Will send you, Korah-like, a sinkin'  
Straught to auld Nick's.

Before retiring to Galston, Rankine had farmed Adamhill, in the parish of Craigie, and not far from Lochlie, where the poet resided, when he made the acquaintance of Rankine, on whose daughter Annie he composed a highly-coloured song, descriptive of a nocturnal ramble in her company. From all I can learn regarding Rankine, by those who knew him during his residence in Galston, he was fully entitled to the credit of all that has been said of him, both by the poet and his editors. John Rankine, also, like Ellison Begbie, has left a memorial of his residence at Irvineside, in the form of his eight-day clock, now in the possession of a much-respected inhabitant, Mr John W. Lyon, whose wife is a niece of Rankine's daughter. Mr Campbell Wallace, already mentioned, has the same worthy's toddy-dividers, and is also the possessor of Nance Tannock's gill-stoup.

Another individual belonging to Galston, and whose connection with Burns was first made public by the present writer in an article which he contributed to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, June 30th,



1894, may be here referred to. The article deals with a hitherto unrecorded incident in the life of Burns, during the period of his residence at Mossgiel, which shows the character of the poet in a light everywhere reflected in his writings, and has reference to the fortunes of "Wee Davock," an individual, mention of whom in his poem called *The Inventory*, has been passed over by every editor of the life and works of Burns. In May, 1785, with a view to liquidate ten millions of unfunded debt, Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister, made a large addition to the number of taxed articles, and amongst these were female servants. It therefore became the duty of his friend and patron, Mr. Robert Aiken, as surveyor of the district in which Burns lived, to serve the usual notice on the poet, who on receipt of it made his return in the amusing poem already mentioned, in which he gives

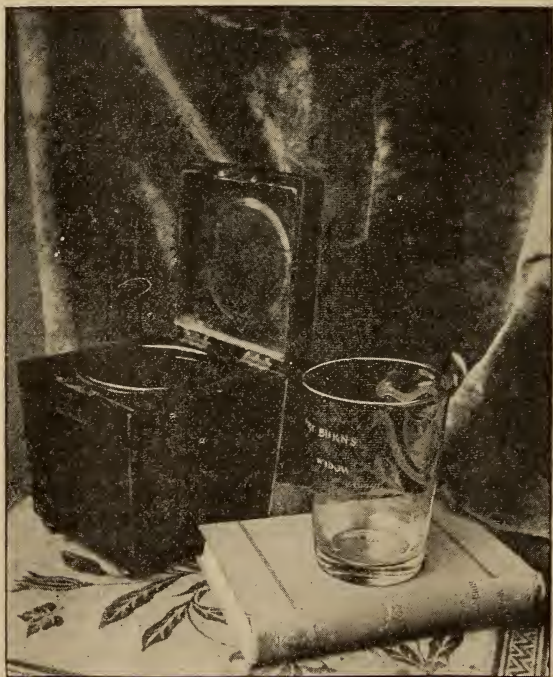
A faithfu' list  
O' gudes an gear and a' my graith,  
To which I'm clear to gi'e my aith.

He goes on to say :—

For men, I've three mischievous boys,  
Run-deils for rantin' an' for noise ;  
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t'other :  
Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother.  
I rule them as I ought, discreetly,  
And often labour them completely ;  
An' aye on Sundays dully, nightly,  
I on the "Questions" targe them tightly ;  
Till, faith ! Wee Davock grown sae gleg,  
Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,  
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling  
As fast as ony in the dwelling.

The infant prodigy whose progress in theological matters is here so graphically narrated, was one of four orphan children, named Robert, David, Janet, and Agnes Hutchieson, who were left in charge of Burns. Their father had acted as ploughman to the Burns family when they lived in Lochlie; and when Hutchieson's health broke down, through fever, the poet took Janet, the eldest, and David, the youngest, under his care. Neither were ever at school, but, according to local tradition, Burns made fairly good scholars of both. Janet remained in the service of the Burns family for some years, and latterly died in Old Cumnock. David acted as herd laddie, an occupation suited to his tender years. The other two were employed by neighbouring farmers, and all of them turned out useful and respected members of society, in which

some of their descendants have made a most respectable figure. "Wee Davock," who was never married, died at Galston, in the house of his brother Robert, a local Radical of note, as were many of the Galstonians in the early decades of the present century. Robert's political opinions led to his voluntary expatriation, and he died in America. "Wee Davock" had a pot—a common stew-pot—which he got from Burns. This relic is now the property of a lady who values it very highly—a grand-daughter of Robert Hutchieson, David's eldest brother. It may be worth while noting here, that another form of the name of the family protected by Burns, is the appellation of his sole-surviving male descendant, Robert Burns Hutchinson, only son of Mrs. Hutchinson, daughter of Colonel James Glencairn Burns, the poet's third son.



Mrs. Hutchinson, the interesting lady here referred to, presented the present writer with a tumbler, originally the property of our National Poet. As any relic of Burns, by whomsoever possessed, is of deep interest to admirers of the poet, I make no apology for presenting the reader with a detailed and illustrated

account of this relic, preserved in the little Burns Collection which I have gathered together in my home at Galston. The relic is enclosed in a handsome oak-velvet, and secured by a lock. On one side of the tumbler is engraved an enlarged copy of the Arms, as it is styled which an illustration on the other side of the glass :—



The above illustration is reproduced from an article on Burns's Seal which the writer contributed to *The Journal of the Ex-Libris Society* for August, 1893. This article is reprinted in Dr. Ross' *Burnsiana*, vol. v., pp. 73-75.

This glass, once the property of  
ROBERT BURNS,  
was presented by the  
Poet's Widow  
To JAMES ROBINSON, Esq.,  
and given by his  
Widow  
To her Son-in law,  
MAJOR JAMES GLENCAIRN BURNS,  
1840.

The following letter, in the holograph of the donor, gives the history of the relic :—

3, BERKELEY STREET,  
CHELTENHAM, *July 6, 1892.*

MY DEAR MR. MUIR,— . . . I purpose sending you by the Parcels Post to-night, enclosed in a box, a tumbler that belonged to my grandfather the Poet, and hope you will accept it from me.

I believe he had four of them, but one has been broken. The one I now send you was given by my grandmother, Jean Armour, to Mr. James Robinson of Sunderland. He was father of my mother, who died when I was born.

When my father returned from India, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Robinson, gave this tumbler to my father, and he had the inscription and his father's coat-of-arms engraved on the glass. . . . Now for the history of the box. It was made from one of the piles of old London Bridge. The light pieces of oak are from the "Royal George." My father had them given him by friends. . . .

Yours sincerely,

S. HUTCHINSON.

Besides the tumbler, I have a large and interesting collection of letters from the descendants of the poet and collateral branches of

his family ; but such of these as are not on private matters relating either to the writers or their illustrious ancestor, are of no interest to the public. Besides, they are private and confidential communications, and will always be considered as such by their possessors. I may, however, give the title-pages of two editions of Burns in my small collection, not on account of their rarity and scarcity, but simply on account of their not being in the three chief Burns collections in the world—the British Museum, London; M'Kie Burnsiana Library, Kilmarnock; and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow; and for that reason they are probably not so well known to collectors as more valuable works.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS, the Ayrshire Bard : including all the Pieces originally published by Dr. Currie ; with various Additions. A New Edition, with an enlarged and corrected Glossary, and a Biographical Sketch of the Author. [8vo.]

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,  
That's a' the learning I desire ;  
Then tho' I drudge through dub an' mire  
At pleugh or cart,  
My muse, tho' hamely in attire,  
May touch the heart.

*London* : JONES & COMPANY. 1823.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS, the Ayrshire Bard : including all the Pieces originally published by Dr. Currie ; with various Additions. A New Edition, with an enlarged and corrected Glossary, and a Biographical Sketch of the Author. [8vo.]

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Then tho' I drudge through dub and mire  
At pleugh or cart,  
My muse, tho' hamely in attire,  
May touch the heart.

*London* : JONES & COMPANY. 1827.

To these may be added copies of the title-pages of five translations of Burns in the same collection.

ZATERDAGAVOND OP HET LAND. VRIJ BEWERKT  
NAAR, ROBERT BURNS, door Pol de Mont. [Quarto.]

*Amsterdam* : S. WARENDORF, JR. N.D.

The "Cottar's Saturday Night" translated into Dutch. Illustrated.

NAGRA DIKTER AF ROBERT BURNS. Ofversattning. [8vo.]

*Stockholm* : KLEMMINGS ANTIQUARIAT. 1872.

Translation into Swedish, by G. M. O. Elizabeth Retzins.



ROBERT BURNS' GEDICHTE IN AUSWAHL. Deutsch von  
Gustav Legerlotz. [8vo.]

*Leipzig*: OTTO SPAMER. 1889.

German translation (selected) by my friend, Dr. Legerlotz.

ROBERT BURNS: Vybor z Pisni a Ballad. Prelozil Jos. V.  
Sladek. [8vo.]

*Praze*: NAKLADATELSTVI J. OTTO KNIGHTISKARNA. [1892.]

Svazek 12. Sbornik Svetone Poesie Vydava Ceska Akademie Cisare Frantiska Josefa  
Pro. Vedy, Slovesnost a Umeni. Rocknik II. Trida IV. Cislo 6.

The last paragraph of the preface contains this reference to Mr. Edmond Gosse, and Mr.  
John Muir, late editor of the *Burns Chronicle*:—"Za pratelskou pomoc, ktere se mi ochotne  
dostalo z Anglice od basnika Ed. W. Gosse a vydavatele "Burnsovy Kroniky" pana Johna  
Maira z Kilmarnocku. Vzdavam vrole díky.

The above work is a rendering of Burns into Cech (the language of Bohemia), the first  
Slavonic language into which the works of Burns have been translated. The translator is  
Professor Sladek, the Bohemian lyrical poet, whose "Mickiewicz: Konrad Wallenrod," forms  
number 2 of the same series as this Burns volume. M. Sladek's last work, "Ceske Písne"  
(National Lyrics), is "Dedicated to John Muir, the Pioneer of Bohemia's cause in Scotland."

POESIE DI ROBERTO BURNS. Prima Versione Italiana, di  
Ulisse Ortensi, Vice Bibliotecario Reggente della Biblioteca Gover-  
nativa de Cremona. Parte Prima. [Sm. 8vo.]

*Modena*: E. SARASINO. 1893.

Preface in English by John Muir, F.S.A., Scot.

Half a mile from Galston, along the road running eastwards to  
Newmilns, is situated Barr Mill, once the home of the hero of  
one of the very finest humorous ballads in the whole range of  
Scots minstrelsy. I cannot resist the temptation to give the ballad  
in full, followed by the remarks anent it from the pen of our poet:—

I had a horse, and I had nae mair,  
I gat him frae my daddy;  
My purse was light and my heart was sair,  
But my wit it was fu' ready.  
And sae I thought me on a time,  
Outwittens o' my daddy,  
To fee mysel' to a Highland laird  
Wha had a bonnie lady.  
I served twa years the Highland laird,  
Though meat and fee were scanty;  
His service had been drudgery  
But for his wife sae canty;  
For me her kindly words, I trow,  
And smiles were aye sae ready;  
My lips like tinder took the lowe  
To kiss the bonnie lady.

I wrote a letter, and thus began:  
"Madame, be not offended,  
I'm o'er the lugs in love wi' you,  
And care na though you kend it;

For I get little frae the laird,  
 And far less frae my daddy,  
 And I wad blythely be the man  
 Wad strive to please my lady."

She read my letter and she leuch :  
 "Ye needna been sae blate, man ;  
 Ye might hae come to me yoursel',  
 And told me o' your state, man ;  
 You might hae come to me yoursel',  
 Outwitten o' ony body,  
 And made *Jock Gowkston* o' the laird  
 And kiss'd his bonnie lady."

Then she put siller in my purse,  
 We drank wine in a cogie ;  
 She fie'd a man to rub my horse,  
 And vow but I was vogie.  
 But I gat ne'er sae sair a fleg,  
 Since I cam frae my daddy,  
 The laird cam rap, rap, to the yet  
 When I was wi' his lady.

Then she put me below a chair,  
 And happ'd me wi' a plaidie,  
 But I was like to swarf wi' fear,  
 And wished me wi' my daddy.  
 The laird gaed out, he saw na me,  
 I gaed when I was ready ;  
 I promised, but I ne'er gaed back,  
 To kiss his bonnie lady.

Burns remarks on this clever production :—

A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectable farming family who lived in a place in the parish of Galston called Barr Mill, was the luckless hero that "had a horse and had nae mair." For some little youthful follies, he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West Highlands, where he "feed himself to a Highland laird." The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great grandchild to our hero.

In the above note, Burns states that the facts recorded were communicated to him by Mr. Hunter. This Hunter may have been a subscriber for the poet's first edition, and may have been visited by Burns when collecting the monies mentioned in a letter to Mr. Robert Muir, dated March 7th, 1788 :—

There are several small sums owing me for my first edition about Galston and Newmills.



Farther along the same road, the oldest paper mill in Ayrshire is passed, and near it the residence of Mr. John Macintosh, the artist-poet, from one of whose books I borrow this Burns acrostic :—

R obbed with her inspiration rod,  
O ld Poesy stood awhile,  
B efore a genius' bright abode,  
E lse home of mental toil.  
R est ever with me, here, thou gentle muse,  
T he poet said, and Poesy answered thus :

B right soul, beholden to my spell,  
U nsullied be thy fame ;  
R eign here, O inspiration still,  
N or ever bid the heart farewell,  
S uch honour that can claim.\*

Leaving the paper mill, the Greenholm part of Newmilns (but in Galston parish) is reached. Near Newmilns railway station is the scene of Ramsay's popular song, *The Lass of Patie's Mill*. The present mill is modern, and occupies the site of the erection which graced the banks of the Irvine in Ramsay's day ; but the field where the rustic beauty was making hay, when she attracted the attention of the Earl of Loudon, is still pointed out ; and although nearly two hundred years have passed since that event, the student of Scots minstrelsy stops by the bank of the stream and enquires for the song-hallowed scene. I give the song, but it can hardly be new to any of my readers.

The lass of Patie's mill,  
So bonny, blyth and gay,  
In spite of all my skill,  
Hath stole my heart away.  
When tedding of the hay  
Bare-headed in the green,  
Love 'midst her locks did play,  
And wanton'd in her een.

Her arms, white, round and smooth,  
Breasts rising in their dawn,  
To age it would give youth,  
To press them with his hand.  
Thro' all my spirits ran  
An extasy of bliss,  
When I such sweetness found  
Wrapt in a balmy kiss.

\* From *Poems*, by John MacIntosh, 1890, page 216.

Without the help of art,  
 Like flowers which grace the wild,  
 She did her sweets impart,  
 Whene'er she spoke or smil'd.  
 Her looks they were so mild,  
 Free from affected pride,  
 She me to love beguil'd  
 I wish'd her for my bride.

I quote this song as printed in a work which seems to have escaped the notice of the bibliographers of the Kilmarnock press. The title page runs thus :—

THE TEA-TABLE MISCELLANY : A Collection of Choice Songs, Scots and English, in two volumes, by Allan Ramsay. The Seventeenth Edition. Kilmarnock : Printed by J. Wilson, MDCCXXXVIII.

The story of the circumstances which led to the composition of this song as described by Burns is well known. The poet says :—

The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it from the last John, Earl of Loudon. The then Earl of Loudon—father to the Earl John before mentioned—had Ramsay at Loudon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near Newmilns, at a place called “Patie’s Mill,” they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His Lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song. Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.

To the south-east of the parish, and rising up gradually from the valley of the Irvine, is a large expanse of land, known as the Galston Muirs, over which the poet rode one stormy night after leaving the hospitable manse of Dr. Laurie, with the stern *Farewell* singing through his soul. His poem, *The Holy Fair*, opens with a most exquisite picture of a summer morning, in which he mentions this wide belt of heather and moss :—

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,  
 When Nature’s face is fair,  
 I walked forth to view the corn,  
 An’ snuff the caller air.  
 The rising sun, owre Galston Muirs,  
 Wi’ glorious light was glintin’ ;  
 The hares were hirplin down the furs,  
 The lav’rocks they were chantin’  
 Fu’ sweet that day.

Any Burnsiana notes on Galston parish would be incomplete which did not refer, however briefly, to the numerous tributes to the High Chief of Scottish Song which have been paid by the Galston Bards—John Wright, Alexander Stewart (“Galstonian”); J. H. Green (widely known under the pen name, “The Ayrshire Vagrant”), John Macintosh (“Rusticus”), and John Ramsay Reid. John Wright’s effusions are well known, and Mr. Macintosh I have already laid under contribution. The limits of my space compel me to confine myself to one example, taken from the poems\* of Mr. Stewart, who undoubtedly ranks after John Wright, as the best poet Galston has produced. His pictures framed in the Doric are admirable productions; and some of the stanzas in the epistle to Adam Miller would do no discredit to Burns himself.

## TO BURNS.

(Written for Galston Burns Club, 25th January, 1878.)

Oh ! many a social band to-night  
 Is gathered round the festive board ;  
 Each eye reflects the cheerful light,  
 Each heart responds to memory’s chord ;  
 From every lip there breathes a name  
 To which affection fondly turns :  
 The first on Scotland’s roll of fame,  
 Old Coila’s minstrel, Robin Burns.

We blend our voices with the streams  
 Which wander ’mong our leafy braes,  
 For every spot he loved now seems  
 To speak of him and sing his praise :  
 Where Nith and Lugar onward croon,  
 Where flows in peace the winding Ayr,  
 Where spread the banks o’ bonnie Doon,  
 His spirit seems to wander there.

Oh, Burns ! though o’er thy silent bed  
 The frosty winds of winter sigh,  
 Though dead—But no ! thou art not dead,  
 For what is deathless cannot die !  
 The products of thy wondrous mind  
 Still breathe and burn in every part,  
 Thy hallowed memory lives enshrined  
 In every faithful Scottish heart.

\* *Bygone Memories*, 1888, page 212.

Thy songs of love, how sweet they fall  
 Like dewdrops on the fainting flowers ;  
 Even age by thee would fain recall  
 Sweet feelings of some earlier hours,  
 Which onward in the bosom leap  
 Like kindlings of a smouldering fire ;  
 Alternately we laugh and weep,  
 As thy swift fingers touch the lyre.

Loved Scotia's Bard !—may son and sire,  
 Possess (with other gifts beside)  
 Thy fervent patriotic fire,  
 Thy manly independent pride ;  
 This night thy name again we breathe,  
 To thee the star of memory turns,  
 For thee we twine the fadeless wreath,  
 And pledge thy memory, Robert Burns.

Having said so much regarding Burns and his connection with the town and parish of Galston, the reader will naturally expect to hear, that a district so redolent of the poet, and reminiscent of those who are celebrated in his writings, is well supplied with Burns Clubs. The truth is, there is not now a Burns Club in the whole parish. That there was such a society at one time, may be gathered from the sub-title of Mr. Stewart's poem ; but it is now defunct, and if there has been any effort made to resuscitate it or to organise a new one, I have never heard of the movement. Surely Galston, on the eve of the Centenary of Burns's death, is earning an unenviable distinction, as the only parish in broad Scotland, with nearly six thousand inhabitants, which has not a Burns Society. Apart from other considerations, which need not be particularised here, but which would outweigh every other reason, the facts imperfectly narrated in the foregoing article would in themselves be sufficient justification to the intelligence of the most obtuse of villagers for the establishment of such a Society on a firm and permanent basis.

Although there is no Burns Club in Galston, the inhabitants are not altogether without a due appreciation of the poet's merits, and the glory reflected on the district by the splendour of his genius. At the Birth-Centenary in 1859, three different celebrations of the event were held in Galston ; and perhaps at the forthcoming Centenary, on 21st July, the number may be doubled.

## BURNS AT ECCLEFECHAN.

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TOWARDS the close of last century, Ecclefechan presented an appearance differing little from its aspect to-day. Lying in a hollow surrounded by wooded slopes, it consisted of two rows of houses of a plain, unornamental character, which were annually whitewashed in honour of the village fair. Down one side of this single street, at that period, ran an open brook, which has been immortalised in *Sartor Resartus* as "the little Kuhbach," but which is now, for sanitary reasons, built over. The street is irregularly formed—a circumstance due not only to the disposition of the houses, but also to the windings of the little stream which gushes kindly by, wimpling and gurgling on its way to join the Mein water at the foot of the town, before the Mein loses itself in the river Annan. On the west side of the burn the houses are of single and two storeys almost alternately, presenting a peculiarly notched appearance, and when seen from a distance, resembling the battlements of an imposing fortress.

In this little village the poet Burns might frequently have been seen during the last years of his life, while acting temporarily as supervisor during the illness of that official. He made at least two visits to Ecclefechan, a record of which has been preserved in print. One of these is recorded by an individual who was lying in the womb of eternity at the time of the poet's first recorded visit; and the other, which took place in the early spring of the year prior to his death, has been recorded by Burns himself. On the day following his entry into Ecclefechan, he had the misfortune to be snowed up; and, to break the monotony of his enforced imprisonment in the village inn, he imbibed to an extent which has left perceptible traces of a suggestive nature on the caligraphy of the following letter—a strange mixture of humour, exaggeration, and unconscious ungratefulness:—

ECCLEFECHAN, *February 7, 1795.*

MY DEAR THOMSON,—You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late), I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked little village. I would have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress. I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam' again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing cat-gut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hand of a butcher, and thinks



himself, *on that very account*, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget my miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them. Like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk, at your service!

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time *then* to tell you all I wanted to say; and, heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—"We'll gang nae mair to yon town?" I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it; try it with this doggrel, until I give you a better. You will find a good set of it in Bowie's collection.

*Chorus*—O wat ye wha's in yon town,  
 Ye see the e'enin' sun upon;  
 The dearest maid's in yon town  
 That e'enin' sun is shinin on'.  
 O sweet to me yon spreading tree,  
 Where Jeanie wanders aft her lane;  
 The hawthorn flower that shades her bower,  
 O when shall I behold again?  
 O wat ye wha's, &c.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night. R. B.

P.S.—As I am likely to be storm-staid here to-morrow, if I am in the humour, you shall have a long letter from me. R. B.

It is a curious circumstance that the sin of intemperance should have been associated with Ecclefechan in the poet's mind. In one of his unpublishable songs he thus refers to it:—

Then up we raise, and took the road,  
 And in by Ecclefechan,  
 Where the brandy-stoup we gar'd it clink,  
 And strang beer ream the quick in.

Burns next morning did not apparently find himself in the humour for literary exertion (how could he, if the above account is to be trusted?), as no other communication from him bearing the Ecclefechan post-mark ever reached Mr. Thomson, who used to boast in after years that all the letters and songs which he had received from the poet were in his possession, and that he would not part with them for love or money.

Our readers, knowing the poet's unreserve, will not, we think, be disposed to accept the above statements as a circumstantial account of the conditions under which the letter was written.



Could any man, in the situation described by Burns, have written such a letter? We opine not. Neither could a tipsy man have composed the lines in honour of Chloris, a sample of which is given in the letter just quoted. All the same, it is to be regretted that our poet so far forgot himself as to call sweet Ecclefechan by the uncomplimentary epithets he has used in describing that now famous village. Little did he dream, in his barleycornian humour, of the destinies of Ecclefechan infants, one of whom, named Thomas Carlyle, born on the 4th of December of the very year of Burns's unlucky visit, was afterwards to be known to the world as the most sympathetic interpreter of his life and writings.



I am indebted to the kind courtesy of the proprietors and editor of *Scottish Nights*, for the loan of the block from which the illustration given above is taken. Also, to Miss Froude, who holds the copyright, for permission to reproduce the portrait here, and in an article on Carlyle's Life by the present writer which appeared in the miscellany named, on Dec. 6, 1894.

Ecclefechan, even in Burns's time, as the poet must have known in his sober moments, was by no means so contemptible as he would have us suppose. No less than four individuals, whose names and deeds have been rescued from oblivion, and who accompanied Burns part of the way in his all too brief earthly pilgrimage, were born in or near Ecclefechan, namely; Janet Little,

the Scotch milkmaid, who corresponded with, and addressed several poems to Burns; and William Nicol ("Willie brewed a peck o' maut"). But it is chiefly as having been the birthplace of Dr. James Currie, of Liverpool, the amiable editor of Burns's Works, and the most effective friend of the poet's family, that Ecclefechan interests admirers of Burns. Its crowning glory is, however, that it was there Thomas Carlyle was born, and lies buried beside the dust of his kindred in the quiet little churchyard.

Nor was Ecclefechan and the Carlyles without their influence on Burns's muse. A real or imaginary damsel of that ilk, named "Lucky Laing," was the heroine of a little anonymous song first published in *Johnson's Musical Museum*, but now considered by the majority of competent critics to be from the pen of Burns. After our poet's description of the village, the reader will perhaps be prepared not to expect too much in the matter of minstrelsy; for what "wicked little village" could be otherwise than disappointing in respect of its bonnie lassies? Here is the song:—

Gat ye me, O gat ye me,  
 O gat ye me wi' naething?  
 Rock and reel, and spinning wheel,  
 A mickle quarter basin :  
 Bye attour, my gutcher has  
 A high house and a laigh ane,  
 A' forbye my bonnie sel',  
 The toss of Ecclefechan.  
 O haud yer tongue now, Luckie Laing,  
 O haud yer tongue and jauner ;  
 I held the gate till you I met,  
 Syne I began to wander :  
 I tint my whistle and my sang,  
 I tint my peace and pleasure ;  
 But your green graff, now, Luckie Laing,  
 Wad airt me to my treasure.

This little song, says a critic, although not of the highest order, is dramatically perfect, both in style and humour. The majority of our readers, however, may not quite appreciate the dialogue. In the first stanza, "Lucky Laing," who boasts to her husband scornfully of her wealth and personal attractions, is the speaker. In the second stanza the disconsolate husband replies, and intimates that her demise would enable him to marry again more according to his own inclination. In the last verse of the song, *There grows a bonnie brier bush*, the hero is made to ask:—

Will ye go to the dancin' in Carlyle's ha' ?  
 Will ye go to the dancin' in Carlyle's ha' ?  
 Whare Sandy and Nancy I'm sure will ding them a' !  
 I winna gang to the dance in Carlyle's ha'.

It is not improbable that Burns, as he sat at the window of the village inn on that bleak February day, more than a hundred years ago, enjoying his post-prandial glass, and watching the snowflakes melting in the spated stream, may perhaps have cast his eyes on a whitewashed, two-storey house on the opposite side of the street, a little way from the hostelry. If he did, he may have observed a man with a stern, resolute face; clear, intelligent eyes; and a strong rather than refined, but not coarse, mouth. This man, a stone-mason to trade, is well known to his neighbours as a person of great force of character, and much respected in the district, not less for his moral worth than for his natural strength of intellect. He is one year older than the poet, but out-lived his ill-starred contemporary thirty-six years. James Carlyle, the name of the individual we have endeavoured to describe, chanced on one of Burns's visits to Ecclefechan to see the subject of his eldest son's future essay and lecture. But I cannot do better than allow the younger Carlyle to contrast these two remarkable men, and his reflections thereon, for James Carlyle, in his own way, was quite as remarkable as Robert Burns:—

The more I reflect on it, the more must I admire how completely nature had taught my father; how completely he was devoted to his work, to the task of his life; and content to let *all* pass by unheeded, that had not relation to this. It is a singular fact, for example, that though a man of such openness and clearness, he had never, I believe, read three pages of *Burns's Poems*. Not even when all about him became noisy and enthusiastic (I the loudest)\* on that matter, did he feel it worth his while to renew his investigations of it, or once turn his face towards it. The poetry *he* liked (he did not call it poetry) was truth and the wisdom of reality. Burns, indeed, could have done nothing for him. As high a greatness hung over his world as over that of Burns (the everlasting greatness of the Infinite itself): neither was he, like Burns, called to rebel against the world, but to labour patiently at his task there; "uniting the possible with the necessary" to bring out the real (wherein also lay an ideal). Burns could not have in any way strengthened him in his course; and therefore was for him a phenomenon merely. Nay, rumour had been so busy with Burns, and destiny and his own desert had in very deed so marred his name, that the good rather avoided him. Yet it was not with aversion that my father regarded Burns; at worse, with indifference and neglect. I have heard him speak of once seeing him: standing at "Rob Scott's smithy" (at Ecclefechan, no doubt superintending some work), he heard someone say, "There is the poet Burns;" he

\* The reference here is to the Carlyle's essay on the poet, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, for December, 1828.



went out to look, and saw a man with boots on, like a well-dressed farmer, walking down the village on the opposite side of the burn. This was all the relation these two men ever had : they were very nearly coevals. I knew Robert Burns, and I knew my father ; yet were you to ask me which had the greater natural faculty, I might perhaps actually pause before replying ! Burns had a infinitely wider education ; my father a far wholesomer : besides, the one was a man of musical utterance, and the other wholly a man of action, even with speech subservient thereto. Never, of all the men I have seen, has one come personally in my way in whom the endowment from nature and the arena from fortune were so utterly out of all proportion. I have said this often ; and partly *know* it. As a man of speculation (had culture ever unfolded him) he must have gone wild and desperate like Burns : but he was a man of conduct, and work kept all right. What strange, shapeable creatures we are !



It should be explained, with reference to Carlyle's remark that his father and the poet "were very nearly coevals," that Burns was born in 1759, and died in 1796 ; and that James Carlyle, who was born in 1758, died in 1832, at the age of seventy-four.

With reference to the proposed song on "The Fair Dame," whom Burns had in his eye as an artistic model during his inauspicious visit to Ecclefechan, and of which mention is made in his letter, the following bibliographical notes, which can hardly be familiar to many of our readers, are culled by the writer from a collection of

chap-books, mostly bearing the imprint of Brash & Reid, Glasgow, but, unfortunately, nearly all without dates. One of these little publications contains "two favourite songs by Robert Burns," namely, *O wat ye wha's in yon toun?* and *Open the door to me, oh!* As we have seen from the letter to Thomson, the first of these lyrics was primarily intended to celebrate the charms of Miss Lorimer, but was afterwards, as we shall see, made to serve the double purpose of a tribute of the poet's admiration of the beautiful Lucy Johnston, wife of Richard A. Oswald, of Auchencruive, at that time residing in Dumfries; and that when Burns sent it for insertion in *Johnson's Museum*, he again made Miss Lorimer the heroine by altering the name of "Lucy" to "Jean" and "Jeanie"—for Jean Lorimer, the poet's Chloris.

In May, 1795, Burns enclosed the song in a letter to John Syme, asking him whether he thought he might venture to present it to Mrs. Oswald; but no mention has been made by any editor of Burns's works of the interesting fact that the song was first printed in the *Glasgow Magazine* for September, 1795, with "Jean" and "Jeanie" substituted for "Lucy," and a few other necessary modifications. The song will be found on page 155, volume I., of this scarce Glasgow periodical (a copy of which lies before me), under the heading of "Song, by Robert Burns (never before published)." This gives us a probable clue to the date of the chap-book edition, the song in which is an exact reproduction of the version given in the *Glasgow Magazine*. The probability is, therefore, that it was printed from the last-named publication before its appearance in *Johnson's Museum*, December, 1796.

In the copy written for Mrs. Oswald, the third line of the chorus reads:—

The fairest dame's in yon toun.

In the Glasgow publication, as in the letter to Thomson:—

The fairest maid's in yon toun.

Line two of the third verse (not reckoning the chorus, with which the song begins):—

And on yon bonnie banks of Ayr.

Line four:—

And dearest bliss is Lucy fair.

These read in the *Glasgow Magazine*:—

Among the broomy braes sae green;

And dearest treasure is my Jean.

The chap-book has "pleasure" (probably a misprint) for "treasure." Next verse, third line, for "Lucy," "Jeanie;" next

verse, fourth line, for "tend," "tent;" last verse but one, fourth line, for "Lucy," "Jeanie;" and first line of last verse:—

For while life's dearest blood is warm,  
read in the magazine and chap-book:—

For while life's dearest blood runs warm.

Mr. Scott Douglas, in his Library Edition of the Works of Burns, appends a long note to this song, in which he remarks that "it was no unusual thing with Burns to shift the devotion of a verse from one person to another;" but, like all other commentators on the poet's writings, he evidently believed that the song was first printed in *Johnson's Museum*.

Apropos the other song, *Open the door to me, oh!* given in the same chap-book, it may interest the reader if I state, in concluding these notes, that it was altered by Burns, in 1793, from an Irish song, and printed in the volume of Thomson's Collection, issued in the same year. The third line of the second verse read thus in the chap-book version:—

The frost that freezes the life at my breast,  
instead of, as in Thomson's version:—

The frost that freezes the life at my heart.

With this exception, the two versions agree with the generally accepted text. How much of this song is old, and what improvements were made by Burns, cannot now be determined, as none of the poet's editors or annotators have thought it worth while to present the original words. There can be little doubt, however, that the genius of Burns has been infused into the lyric; and I am here tempted to enhance the value of these notes by quoting from Carlyle's famous essay, his remarks on the third verse of this pathetic song:—

We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire, as lightening lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. . . . It is needless to multiply examples of his graphic power and clearness of sight. One trait of the finest sort we select from multitudes of such among his songs. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling, the saddest environment and local habitation:—

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,  
*And time is setting with me, O;*  
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair  
I'll ne'er trouble them nor thee, O.



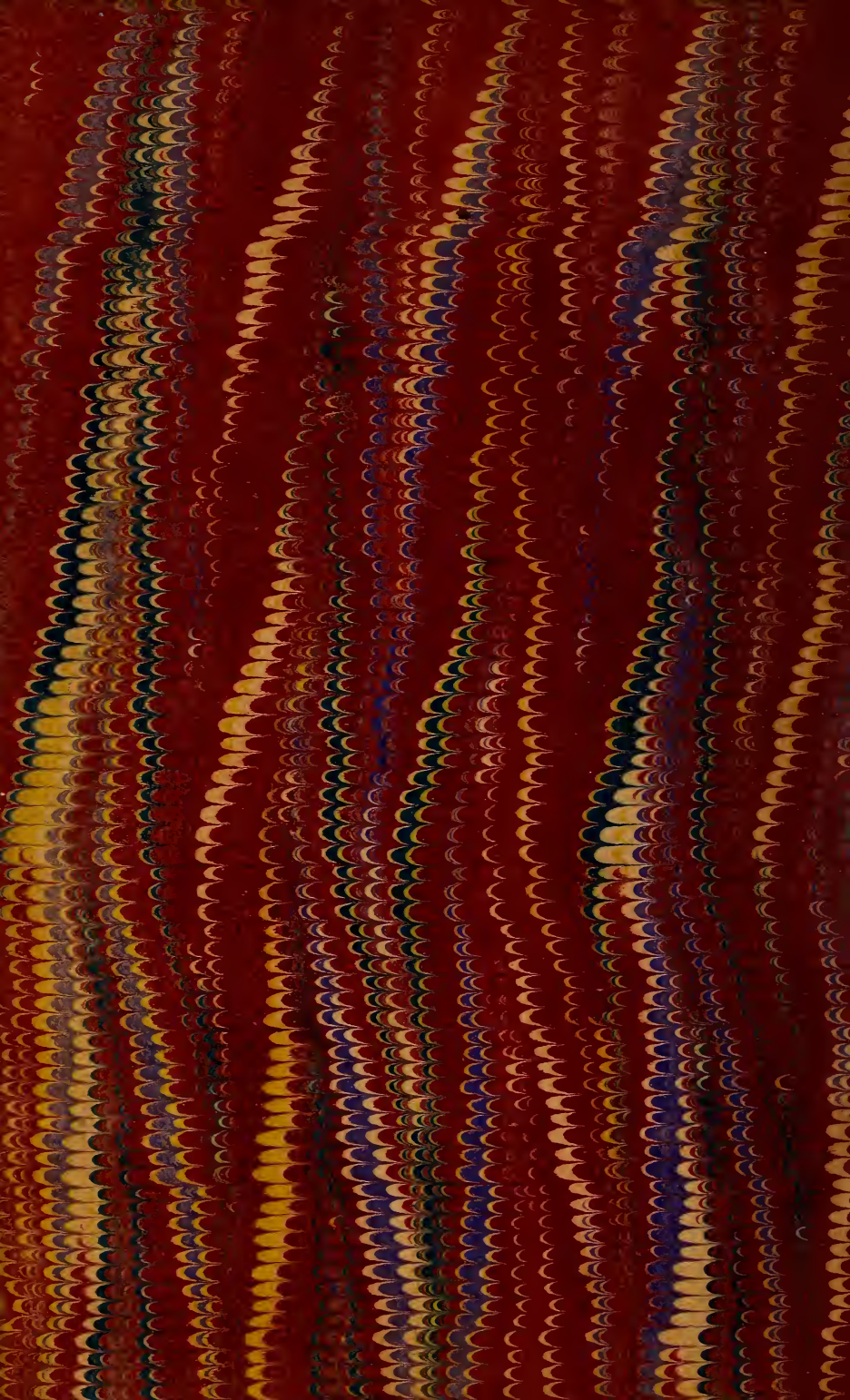




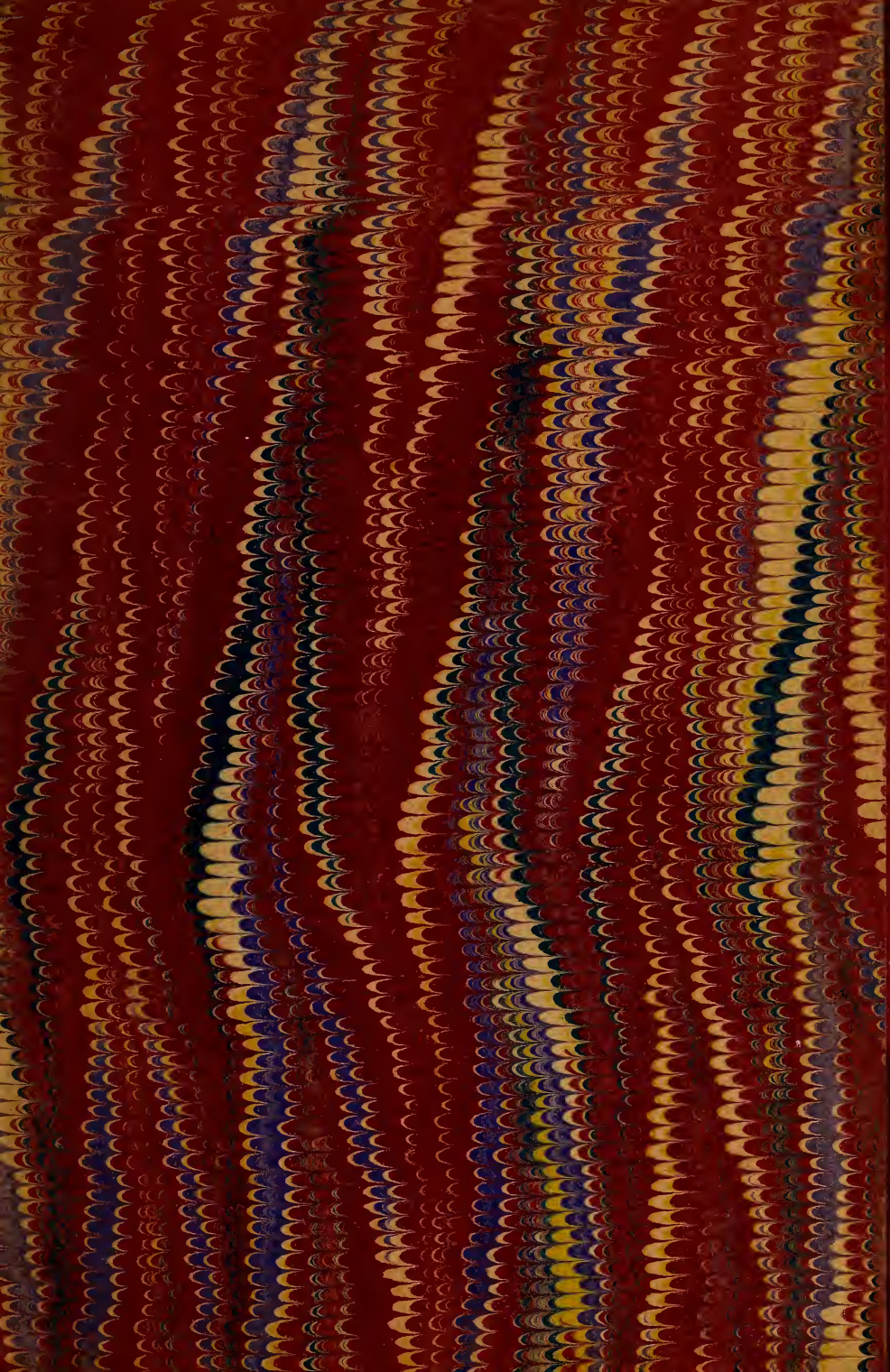












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